



Report I of the 40th Statewide
Investigating Grand Jury

REDACTED

By order of PA Supreme Court July 27, 2018

Father Michael Robert Freeman

Biographical Information

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| YEAR OF BIRTH: | 1946 |
| YEAR OF DEATH: | N/A |
| ORDINATION: | May 27, 1972 |

Employment/Assignment History

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| 6/10/1972 | St. Margaret, Buffalo, NY |
| 2/15/1975 | St. Lawrence, Buffalo |
| | Part-time teacher, Bishop Turner High School |
| 7/31/1976 | Sacred Heart, Niagara Falls, NY |
| 7/01/1980 | Chaplain, United States Army |
| 11/09/1981 | Ecclesiastical Endorsement revoked |
| 9/11/1982 | St. Christopher, Tonawanda, PA |
| 9/01/1984 | St. Mary, Lancaster, PA |
| 3/21/1989 | Faculties Revoked |

Summary

Based on the information provided to the Grand Jury by the Diocese of Erie, the Grand Jury learned that Father Robert Freeman had some contact with the Diocese of Erie but he was not incardinated into the Diocese as a Diocesan priest. In fact, Freeman was a Priest in the Diocese of Buffalo, New York. Father Freeman was ordained May 27, 1972. In five of his six subsequent assignments he admitted inappropriate sexual behavior with young men on multiple occasions. These instances of sexual abuse occurred while he acted in his capacity as a priest of the Diocese of Buffalo but while he ministered in various assignments to include locations within Pennsylvania. The Diocese of Buffalo first became aware of Freeman's criminal activity in November 1981. Freeman admitted prior sexual misconduct at both St. Margaret and St. Lawrence Parishes in New York. This included his term of service at Bishop Turner High School. The Buffalo Diocese continued to permit Freeman to serve in active ministry until March 1989 and continued to provide financial aid to Freeman until July 31, 1999, at which time he informed the Diocese that his salary and health insurance would be covered by his new employer.

The Grand Jury found no documentation in Freeman's file that indicated that the Dioceses of Buffalo or Erie ever notified law enforcement officials, despite the fact that Freeman admitted to sexually violating children in at least five of his six ministry assignments. On two occasions he was treated at the Southdown Institute, a psychiatric facility for clergy and religious personnel in Aurora, Ontario. While one of Freeman's assignments was as a military chaplain, locations within Pennsylvania at which Freeman may have sexually abused children include the counties of Bradford and Lancaster.